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CHRISTOPHER J. WARREN, Ph.D.

MEMBER OF NY BAR

# PLEVY & ASSOCIATES ATTORNEYS AT LAW

P.O. Box 1366 146 Route 1, North Edison, New Jersey 08818-1366

(908) 572-5858

PATENTS TRADEMARKS COPYRIGHTS

FACSIMILE (901) 572-5963

OF COUNSEL DEAN W. CHAC

May 9, 1996

Assistant Commissioner of Patents Washington, DC 20231

RE: Provisional Application

TOBIN-2

Inventor: WILLIAM TOBIN

Entitled: METHOD FOR CUSTOMIZING MARKETING SERVICES ON INTERNET SITES

Dear Sir:

# Enclosed please find the following:

- 1. A Provisional Application consisting of 12 pages of specification;
- 2. 6 sheets of drawings;
- 3. a provisional application cover sheet
- verified statement;
- 5. Check No. 5005 in the amount of \$75.00;
- 6. Certificate of Express Mail; and
- 7. a postcard receipt.

If there are any fees due and owing, please charge Deposit Account No. 16-2131

Respectfully, submitted,

ARTHUR I PLEV Beg Mo. 24,277

P.O. Box 1366 146 Route 1, North Edison, NJ 08818-1366 (908) 572-5858 ALP/kr Encls. MAY 2 1996

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Atty Dkt #: Tobin-2 Pro

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re patent application of Tobin

Serial No.: to be assigned

Filed: Herewith

For: METHOD FOR CUSTOMIZING MARKETING SERVICES ON INTERNET SITES

Assistant Commissioner of Patents Washington, DC 20231

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# METHOD FOR CUSTOMIZING MARKETING SERVICES ON INTERNET SITES

# **BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION**

The Internet which consists of world wide networks of computers communicating on the Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol (TCP/IP) offers a variety of information exchange capabilities such as electronic mail (e-mail) file transfers between computers through the file transfer protocol (FTP) format. However, the HyperText interface to the Internet, known as the World Wide Web (WWW) is the fastest growing Internet function. The WWW uses Hyper Transport Protocol (HTTP) and HyperText Markup Language (HTML) to organize and present information and services throughout the Internet. Users accessing the WWW are able to utilize a system of "point and click" connections between information that allow them to jump from one information source to another on the Internet in a random, unstructured pattern.

As the Internet, and in particular the WWW and its random user movement capabilities, is increasingly used for consumer servicing, methods for marketing on the Internet must be developed. In particular, a method for marketing a service with various internet service providers or sites is needed whereby the marketing service is customized in both graphic and content format to the specific Internet or Web site the consumer is browsing on to take advantage of the consumer's existing relationship or familiarity with

the specific Internet site or Web site.

Accordingly, it is an object of the present invention to disclose a method for marketing an internet consumer service specific to the internet site from which the consumer service is being initially marketed.

### BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

- FIG. 1 shows a home page marketing Valentine's Day related floral and gift services in accord with the present invention customized for an ISN Internet site.
- FIG. 2 shows one of the content options linked to the home page of FIG. 1 through the icon links, lists and laughs.
- FIG. 3 is a flow chart for implementing the floral and gift services of FIGS. 1 and 2 in accord with the present invention for the ISN Internet site.
- FIG. 4 shows a home page marketing Valentine's Day related floral and gift services in accord with the present invention customized for a Playboy Internet site.
- FIG. 5 shows one of the content options linked to the home page of FIG. 4 through the icon links, lists and laughs.
- FIG. 6 is a flow chart for implementing the floral and gift services of FIGS. 4 and 5 in accord with the present invention for the Playboy Internet site.
- FIG. 7 shows a home page marketing Valentine's Day related floral and gift services in accord with the present invention customized for a Pathfinder Internet site.

### **DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION**

Essentially, the Internet is a network of various types of computers, connected over telecommunication lines, communicating with each other through a protocol known as Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol (TCP/IP) for the purpose of exchanging information. Being "connected to the Internet" can mean anything from sending a simple message to a colleague across the state, to logging into another computer halfway around the world to search and retrieve text, graphics, sounds and even movies. Accessing the Internet requires a computer which has TCP/IP communication capabilities and is physically connected to the Internet with an identifiable Internet address. Many Internet service providers, such as Prodigy, America On Line, and CompuServe, offer access to the Internet through their TCP/IP compatible UNIX computers already connected to the Internet. A subscriber to one of these service providers need only have a personal computer and modem to make a telecommunication connection to the service provider's UNIX computer.

Various information exchanges on the Internet are available through functions such as electronic message exchange (E-mail) and File Transfer Protocol (FTP or ftp.). Electronic mail is a service that allows two people to send messages to each other in a near real time manner. Messages can be sent to one address or multiple addresses. E-mail can also be used to retrieve documents from others computers on the Internet. FTP

refers to moving files from one place to another on the Internet. The files may contain electronic documents, images, sounds, etc. Anything stored on the computer can be moved with FTP.

In recent years, a new mode of navigating through the Internet called the World Wide Web (WWW) has emerged which provides a HyperText interface to information on the Internet. The WWW uses the client-server model of computer Interaction, with the server being a computer on the Internet providing information, and the client being a computer retrieving the information. The normal way to navigate through the Internet is by moving through directory trees of Information, whereby moving from node to node requires providing an address for each node. Likewise if the nodes are Internet sites, computers on the Internet, movement from one site to another requires providing an address for each site. In contrast, with the HyperText Interface information can be stored and retrieved in a non-hierarchical structure. In essence, one can "jump" from one place of Information on the Internet to the another through a series of "HyperText links" created by someone. A HyperText link can literally allow one to simply select a word, using a mouse or key command, and immediately be transported to another document on the Internet halfway around the world.

In a HyperText Interface all the technical aspects of moving from computer to computer are hidden, leaving the client free to explore without interference.

Communication through the WWW function is by a HyperText Transport Protocol which uses a HyperText Markup Language (HTML). The HTML uses Uniform Resource Locators (URLs), which are a way of specifying the location of something on the Internet, to make the HyperText links. A standard form of URL address for accessing a particular word 26 marked by HTML, in a chapter called web-chapter, in a book stored on a hard drive in a WWW server is: http://dgf21.xpr.cs.wwu/book/web-chapter.html#word 26. The http connection at the beginning identifies this address to the Internet as a WWW server.

Access to the WWW requires a software tool often called a client or browser which is installed on the computer used to access the internet, or installed on an internet service provider's computer on the internet that offers access to the WWW browser. Browsers may be text based line browsers or, graphical based browsers such as Mosaic or Netscape.

The Internet is being increasingly used for commerce by companies with Internet sites or services providing opportunities to consumers to make purchases. In addition to automated secured transactions, commerce on the Internet requires development of software based marketing tools unique to the Internet structure. Typically, when a web site points to another web server the URL of the web server will appear to indicate that a transfer in Internet sites will occur if the browser executes a HyperText link transfer. As a result, consumers may feel a reluctance to conduct transactions through an Internet

site that they have not directly signed on nor had a longstanding relationship with. Accordingly there is a need for customized marketing on the internet whereby a consumer browsing on an initial internet site is offered services which are in fact processed by another remote internet site or host in a manner appearing to the consumer that the offered service is being processed by the initial internet site.

Although the present invention can be used in many applications which can utilize marketing tools unique to the Internet structure and customized marketing through the pointing Internet sites, the present invention is described in its application to PC Flowers & Gifts, an Internet site providing floral and gift purchasing services through the Internet.

Accordingly, the present invention will be described in its application to the PC Flowers & Gifts marketing program whereby other Internet service providers or sites display offers of floral and gift services customized to their Internet site, but are in fact processed by a remote PC Flowers & Gifts based Internet site in a manner leaving the consumer with the impression that the offering Internet site is providing and processing the floral and gift services. The home pages of the offering internet sites are customized in both graphic and content format to give consumers the impression that they are utilizing the content of the specific web site or on line service on which they have been browsing.

Marketing on the Internet presents problems as to how to customize marketing services through various internet participants so as to appear that the marketing services are being provided by the pointing internet site. Typically, when browsing on a web site which is pointing to a web server, the URL of the web server appears, rather than the URL of the pointing web site, which clearly indicates that a transfer in internet sites will occur if a HyperText transfer is executed.

PC Flowers & Gifts has completely redesigned its web site to be extremely user friendly and to be in a database format. The database format enables development of "private label" floral and gift services that can be customized for many of the major web sites on the Internet and the three online services. For, example, if a consumer were to visit one of the private label floral and gift services home page of Internet sites such as Pathfinder, Playboy, ISN or any of the three online services, all the graphics and product categories on each of the services could be customized under the guidelines established by each individual web site or online service. This would allow each individual web site or online service appearing to the consumer to be part of their Internet content residing on their web servers and online services respectively.

The web sites which might point to the PC Flowers & Gifts web server, such as Playboy, ISN or Pathfinder will make a "c" in their domain server to point to one of the

two Silicone Graphic servers at Magnet Interactive Studios which are hosting the PC Flowers & Gifts service. The domain server is a database that translates the domain names into numerical value IP addresses. Domain names are an internet address such as @domain.name which is an allas of the location's Internet IP address; IP (Internet protocol) being the integral protocol used by the internet for data transfers such as TCP/IP. Consequently, the URL of the pointing web site will appear on the home page as opposed to the URL of the Magnet Web server or the PC Flowers & Gifts URL, thus insuring the consumer's feeling that they are on the pointing web site or on line service.

The advantages of a customized floral and gift service to the various web sites and online services are: building the brand name and Identity of their own floral and gift service; taking advantage of the event driven nature of the floral and gift business on a monthly basis to promote their own site and to generate traffic; and, utilizing the content of the PC Flowers & Gifts floral and gift service to their own marketing advantages. In addition, the various web sites and online services can utilize the unique capabilities of the PC Flowers & Gifts service such as the gift reminder service which is part of the content of the PC Flowers & Gifts service in order to develop a close relationship with their consumers and gain permission to enter the consumer's mailbox in order to remind of various upcoming gift events.

FIGS. 1-6 Illustrate the unique flexibility of the PC Flowers & Gifts "private label"

service. Should ISN, Playboy or Pathfinder feel that only ten of the 35 floral selections in the PC Flowers & Gifts floral section apply to their upscale online consumers, the "ISN Flowers and Gifts", "Playboy Flowers and Gifts" or "Pathfinder Flowers and Gifts" service are customized in such a way that when the online consumer enters their private label service, the online consumer in fact only sees those ten floral products.

The service is customized in both graphic and content format to give the consumer the impression that the consumer is utilizing the content of the specific web site or online service on which the consumer has been browsing. It is transparent to the online consumer that the consumer has in fact left the web site or online service and is actually viewing the content of the PC Flowers and Gifts service which is hosted on the Silicone Graphics servers located at Magnet Interactive Studios in Washington, DC. When the online consumer chooses to pace an order, the consumer is again transported seamlessly to the PC Flowers & Gifts Silicone Graphics Sever with no knowledge that the that the consumer has in fact left the web site or online service. This total customization of graphics and content generated "on the fly" is possible by the entire web site being developed and designed in a database format.

Referring now to FIGS. 1 and 2, there are shown, respectivley, a home page 10 marketing Valentine's Day related floral and gift services, and one of the content options 20 linked to the home page through the icon links, lists and laughs 14 for a brand name

Internet site, i.e. ISN. The content of the home page, 10 and the content option 20, are customized with references to a brand name Internet site, i.e. ISN, at 11, 12, 13, 21, and 22, so as to give the impression that the floral and gift services are provided directly by the brand name Internet site. In accord with the flow chart of FIG. 3, a consumer who elects to purchase while browsing on the ISN Flowers & Gifts home page (10) 301 is transferred to the PC Flowers & Gifts/ISN front office 302. The consumer enters into the actual content portion 20 of the service located on a Silicon Graphics web server which resides at Magnet Interactive Studios in Washington, DC 302. To place an order the consumer enters into a Transaction Management System (TMS) which is located in Washington, DC 303. The transactions or orders are transmitted by the TMS system to PC Flowers & Gifts and its marketing partners which reside in the PC Flowers & Gifts platform 304, i.e. Russ Berrie, Hickory farms, and American Greetings.

Referring now to FIGS. 4 and 5, there are shown, respectivley, a home page 40 marketing Valentine's Day related floral and gift services, and one of the content options 50 linked to the home page through the icon links, lists and laughs 44 for a brand name Internet site, i.e. Playboy. The content of the home page, 40 and content option 50, are customized with references to the a brand name Internet site, i.e. Playboy, at 41, 42, 43, 51, and 52, so as to give the impression that the floral and gift services are provided directly by the brand name Internet site. In accord with the flow chart of FIG. 6, a consumer who elects to purchase while browsing on the Playboy Flowers & Gifts home

page (40) 601 is transferred to the PC Flowers & Gifts/Playboy front office 602. The consumer enters into the actual content portion 50 of the service located on a Silicon Graphics web server which resides at Magnet Interactive Studios in Washington, DC 602. To place an order the consumer enters into a Transaction Management System (TMS) which is located in Washington, DC 603. The transactions or orders are transmitted by the TMS system to PC Flowers & Gifts and its marketing partners which reside in the PC Flowers & Gifts platform 604, i.e. Russ Berrie, Hickory farms, and American Greetings.

Referring now to FIG. 7 there is shown a home page marketing Valentine's Day related floral and gift services in accord with the present invention customized for the Pathfinder Internet site. The content of the home page 70 is customized with references to the Pathfinder Internet site 71, 72 and 73, so as to give the impression that the floral and gift services are provided directly by the Pathfinder Internet Site. To complete transactions initiated from home page 70, the consumer is navigated in accord with the steps detailed in FIGS, 3 and 6.

It should be understood that the embodiment described herein is merely exemplary and that a person skilled in the art may make many variations and modifications to this embodiment utilizing functionally equivalent methods or elements to those described herein. Any and all such variations or modifications as well as others which may become

apparent to those skilled in the art, are intended to be included within the scope of the invention as defined by the specification.

WILLIAM J. TOBIN, President PC Flowers & Gifts

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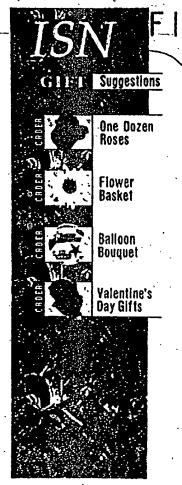
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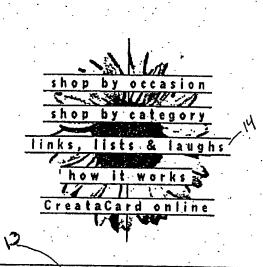
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Valentine's Day
February 14th

Optimal viewing of the ISN Flowers & Gifts web site requires a web browser that supports authentication, forms, tables, and lackgrounds. To place an order, an SSL enabled browser is required.

Copyright 1995 PC Flowers

Talk to ISN Howers Inquire About An Order

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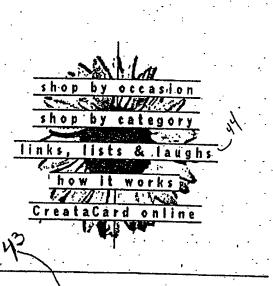
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FIG. 2

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Valentine's Day

Optimal viewing of the Playboy Flowers & Gifts web site requires a web browser that supports authentication, forms, tables, and backgrounds. To place an order, an SSL enabled browser is required.

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Inquire About An Order

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FIG.5

603

# Playboy Flowers & Gifts HOMEPAGE

PC Flowers & Gifts/Playboy Front Office

Consumer enters into actual content portion of service located on a Silicon Graphics web server which resides at Magnet in Washington, DC.

Consumer enters into Transaction
Management System (TMS) to place order. TMS
is located at Magnet in Washington, DC.

TMS transmits orders to PC Flowers & Gifts and its marketing partners who reside in PC Flowers & Gifts platform, (i.e. Russ Berrie, Hickory Farms, and American Greetings).

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# United States Patent [19]

Tobin

[56]

[11] Patent Number: 6,141,666

[45] Date of Patent: Oct. 31, 2000

[54]	METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR
	COSTOMIZING MARKETING SERVICES ON
	NETWORKS COMMUNICATING WITH
	HYPERTEXT TAGGING CONVENTIONS

- [75] Inventor: William J. Tobin, Stamford, Conn.
- [73] Assignee: Internet Consultants I.I.C. Stamford.
- [21] Appl. No.: 08/785,321
- [22] Filed: Jan. 21, 1997

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	Related U.S. Application Data	
[60]	Provisional application No. 60/017,229, Jun. 22, 1996 provisional application No. 60/010,372, May 22, 199	, auc

- [51] Int. Cl.7 G06F 17/21; G06P 17/60 U.S. CI.
- ... 707/513; 705/27; 709/218 Field of Search 705/1, 14, 26, 705/27; 709/203, 217, 218, 219; 707/513,

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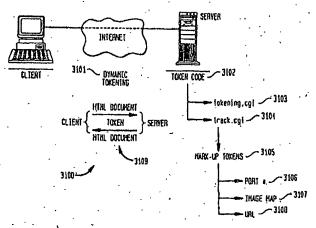
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#### 42 Clutins, 39 Drawing Shoets



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